

Administration of Barack Obama, 2016

Remarks Honoring the 2015 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Champion

September 28, 2016

The President. Please have a seat. It's not that formal around here. *[Laughter]* How you doing? Well, welcome to the White House, everybody. And give it up for NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Champion, Kyle Busch. *[Applause]* Hey!

We also are happy to welcome here Kyle's wonderful wife Samantha, who I just learned is from the Chicago area, so she and I, we've got a little bond going here. *[Laughter]* We've got some Members of Congress here who are big NASCAR fans. We've got NASCAR CEO Brian France and his beautiful family, who—they keep on growing. *[Laughter]* And Dave Alpern, president of Joe Gibbs Racing; and Crew Chief Adam Stevens. Give them all a big round of applause.

Now, as you may be aware, I host a lot of teams from other sports; they all call themselves national champions or world champions. But I've got to hand it to the Number 18 team, who have given themselves the title of "Galaxy Champs." *[Laughter]* That's a first. And I've put in a call to NASA to check to see whether this is, in fact, accurate. *[Laughter]*

Kyle, I hear your ride is outside. Most years, when NASCAR comes to town, I make a joke about looking at the car full of longing and feeling kind of wistful and trying to get Secret Service to let me take a spin. *[Laughter]* But this year's different. In a few months, I can actually do anything I want. *[Laughter]* So, Kyle, we're going to talk. *[Laughter]*

NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Champion Kyle T. Busch. You got it.

The President. I'm not sure, though, Michelle is going to let me drive with a car with a whole bunch of M&M's on them. *[Laughter]* She may want carrots or something. *[Laughter]* Actually, we have White House M&M's here, so those of you who have sampled them, they are good old-fashioned M&M's. *[Laughter]*

Now, it's 2016. I think there were some people who thought we were going to see a Bush back here in the White House this year. *[Laughter]* But they didn't know it was going to be Kyle—*[laughter]*—especially after he broke his leg and his foot at Daytona and missed the first three months of the season.

But he hunkered down, displaying the same determination in rehab that he's known for on the track. He'll be the first to say he could not have done it alone. Obviously, from Samantha's support, to everyone on the Number 18 team who held things down while he got better, the people in Kyle's life kept him driving forward.

It helps, by the way, being young. I just want to point out. *[Laughter]* You know? You heal a little faster. When you're 55, things don't happen that quick. *[Laughter]*

So he ended up being able to return a week early, just a few days before their beautiful, young son Brexton was born. But he still only had a fraction of the season to qualify for the Chase, and that's something to do in a full season.

Luckily, as most folks will attest, Kyle does not lack confidence, apparently. So while he has said that rehabbing was one of the hardest things he's ever done, winning on the racetrack wasn't. And together, he and the Number 18 team won five times on their way to the Cup,

including at the Homestead-Miami Speedway, where Kyle took the lead with just seven laps to go and brought home the championship.

So it was another great season: Kyle's first career Sprint Cup title. But for Kyle, it's not just about what he does on the track, it's what he does off the track. Kyle and Samantha are working hard to make a difference for folks all across the country, from donating wedding gowns to military brides to helping couples afford fertility treatment, to covering expenses for women who are battling breast cancer.

And that goes with the kind of service that we're seeing from the entire NASCAR family. Just a few weeks ago, NASCAR lost its matriarch, Betty Jane France. And she was the guiding light of the sport's community's efforts, including creating the Speediatrics program, which has given more than half a million kids the opportunity to access state-of-the-art medical equipment.

In all, over the past decade, NASCAR has given \$25 million dollars to charitable causes that have helped more than a million kids. And last year, through a tremendous partnership with the VA, they helped more than 5,300 veterans, servicemembers, and their families access the benefits that they have earned.

So all together, it's a legacy of service that honors Betty Jane and stays true to the belief that in serving each other, we make the country better, and we help every member of the American family. And I know that Kyle, Samantha, and others want to continue that legacy.

So, for one last time, let's give a big round of applause for Kyle, his family, Joe Gibbs Racing, and the entire Number 18 team. What do we got here? Here, come on. You get to——

Mr. Busch. I appreciate that. This here is a helmet, one of the few that I have during the season and I raced with in order to bring to you and give a gift on behalf of all of us at Joe Gibbs Racing.

The President. That's a good looking helmet.

Mr. Busch. So that's a real one there.

The President. I really like that helmet now.

Mr. Busch. Yes? See, when you go on your adventure, you could use that one.

The President. I'm going to use this one. Tell me the truth, what are you pumping in through here, though? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Busch. Some really good stuff. [*Laughter*] Yes, sir.

The President. All right. Come on, let's knock the podium, and let's take a good picture. Come on, everybody.

Mr. Busch. You got it. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:18 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. John E. "Jeb" Bush of Florida, in his former capacity as a 2016 Presidential candidate.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : 2015 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Champion.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Alpern, Dave; Busch, Brexton; Busch, Kyle T.; Busch, Samantha; Bush, John E. "Jeb"; France, Brian; Obama, Michelle; Stevens, Adam.

Subjects: Sports : Auto racing; Voluntarism.

DCPD Number: DCPD201600637.